

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

Office of Publication: 129-131 West 6th Street, Newton, Kansas, Send all Mail to Editorial and Executive Office: 145 North Hale Street, Wheaton, Illinois.

An independent Religious Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, His Blood Atonement, Salvation by Faith, New Testament Soul Winning and the Premillennial Return of Christ. Opposes Modernism, Worldliness, and Formalism

VOLUME XI NO. 8 FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1944 \$1.00 PER YEAR

Is One Saved Who Does Not Feel A Change Of Heart?

Answered By The Editor

So many people think that being born again refers to a change in feeling and emotions that we think it wise to give here the editor's answer to a good woman who asked, in effect, the above question. The simple fact is that saved people are often tempted and often sin, though a Christian can have grace day by day to draw nearer the Lord and live more victoriously as he grows in grace. Christians often have times of doubt and despondency, without the assurance that they ought to have. I have known thousands of Christians who, after trusting Christ for salvation, had serious doubts about their salvation. After I was converted I had three sad years when I had no assurance of salvation, because I did not know the Word of God. After I learned from the Bible, that God had promised everlasting life to those who put their trust in Christ, then I knew I was saved, and have never had a serious doubt since of my salvation. However, there are times when I am not as near to Christ as I ought to be, when I do not have as much joy and as much fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit as I ought to have.

Here follows the letter: Forgive the delay in answering your letter in which you asked this question, "Is it possible that one may be saved and not have a change of heart?" Then you say that you have confessed you sins and asked forgiveness many times but God has not changed your heart.

Answer; it is not possible to be saved without a change of heart. However, it is possible to be saved without *feeling* the change of heart like you might want to feel it. I find that many people who trusted Christ and have been truly converted later doubt their salvation because they find that they still have tendencies to sin. They still have an irritable temper, or they are still enslaved by a cigarette habit, or they still want to attend picture shows and dances, or at least are tempted to do so though they feel it is wrong. Such people often say they have not had a change of heart, they have not been born again, because they find that they are still sinners and are still tempted much as they were before they trusted Christ as Saviour.

But such people are confused about what is involved in a change of heart, or the new birth. All the Christians in the Bible, after they were truly converted, still had a tendency to sin, just as all Christians today have. I attended picture shows after I was saved, I often had trouble with my temper and I often found myself selfish and critical. I should not have been selfish, I should not do any wicked thing. I ought to have victory every day. But victory and salvation are not the same. And though I know I trusted Christ as my Saviour, and have assurance, based on the Word of

God, know that my sins are all forgiven and I am going to Heaven, there have been times when I could not feel the witness of the Holy Spirit in my heart. If I did not stay close to God, if I was not as prayerful as I ought to be, if I did not read the Word of God and meditate on it as I should, then I did not have the joy of the Lord, did not have the assurance and witness of the Holy Spirit as I have had at other times. That had nothing to do with the change of heart or being born again. I know I have been born again. I know I do love the Lord. I have the evidence in the Bible. Most of the time I have the joy of it in my own heart. But I do not depend on my feelings nor on how good a man I am for to be sure, I am saved. I am saved because I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, and He plainly promises, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Satan wants people to look to their own feelings instead of to the Word of God, for assurance of salvation. Satan wants people to bare their hopes upon the way they live, instead of depending wholly upon the Lord Jesus to do what He promised to do for us vile sin-



DR. J. ELWIN WRIGHT

ners who do not deserve salvation. Therefore, the thing to do is to simply commit yourself wholly to Christ and trust Him. He promised to save all who came to Him (John 6:37), all who receive Him (John 1:12), all who believed or trusted in Him (John 3:16; John 3:18; John 3:36; John 5:24). God means what He says. If you will commit the matter wholly to God, in faith, knowing that He died for you, and risking Him to take you to Heaven, then the matter is settled no matter how you feel. Saved people do not always feel

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DEATH in the POT

An appraisal of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America
By REV. J. ELWIN WRIGHT, L. L. D.

The Federal Council And The Deity of Christ

ARTICLE II.

I would like to return to a consideration of the one and only doctrinal statement of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America; that which appears in the preamble of its constitution, adopted in 1908. Let us read it again. "... it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches of America in Jesus Christ as their divine Lord and Saviour ..."

It seems that the word "divine" was not included in the original draft and the suggested addition of this word brought on what has been described as a "lively discussion." It was finally adopted unanimously. Mr. John A. Hutchison comments, in his history of the Federal Council, *We Are Not Divided*, that "the net practical effect of this addition has been the exclusion of Unitarians and other similar groups from the Council."

Indeed, it is true that the Unitarian denomination has never become a constituent member of the Council. However, the Council has had in its membership, and continues to have, large numbers of people of Unitarian conviction. There is a growing sentiment among leaders of the Council for the inclusion of the nonevangelical denominations. Unitarians (in belief) are among its officers, members of its commissions and committees, as well as at the forefront of its conferences, missions, and radio programs.

In view of the inclusive policy, of which the Federal Council boasts, its exclusion of bodies like the Unitarians, Universalists, Christian Scientists, and others of similar belief regarding fundamental doctrines seems like unwarranted discrimination. Such bodies are not denied admission to many of the Federal Council dominated City Councils or Federations. There is a curious lack of consistency here which needs explanation.

Dr. Robert Cummins, General Superintendent of the Universalist Church of America, in his recent report to the denomination's biennial convention, October, 1943, charged that the Federal Council had ignored the application of his denomination for admission to membership. He blamed the attitude of the Council on a "strong and determined minority opposition." He stated that during the past two years a series of informal conferences had been held—upon the advice of Council Officials—in an effort "to win over" the antagonistic groups.

Throughout these conferences, Dr. Cummins claimed, "We were questioned thoroughly on matters of theology, although the Council's own by-laws specifically forbid any

credal test in the matter of membership."

"Last December," he added, "following upon our many conferences and filing of our application, the Council met in Cleveland. I was personally present throughout the sessions. Other churches were received into membership. No reference was made to our application."

In September, 1943, Dr. Cummins said identical letters were sent to the president of the Council, its general secretary, and the chairman of the body's advisory committee, asking for information in regard to the disposition of its application.

"The secretary," Dr. Cummins stated, "in making his reply said that a vote had been taken by the advisory committee to the effect that only if in Convention assembled our people voted approval of the action taken by the Trustees and our committee, which clearly stated that, 'we are in full accord with the Evangelical position of the Council as defined in its Constitution,' would there be likelihood of our application being accepted."

The Universalist leader recommended to the convention here that the application as made be allowed to stand unaltered. "By so doing, (Continued on page two)

REVIVAL INCIDENTS, OUTLINES and ILLUSTRATIONS

Evangelist ROBERT J. WELLS, Associate Editor

The Cleansing Power Of Christ's Blood.

It was Charles G. Finney who told this story. He was holding a revival in Detroit. One night as he started to walk into church, a man came up to him. "Are you Dr. Finney?" "Yes."

"I wonder if you will do me a favor. When you get through tonight, will you come home with me and talk to me about my soul?" "Gladly. You wait for me." Finney walked inside and some of the men stopped him. "What did the man want, Brother Finney?" "He wanted me to go home with him."

"Don't do it." "I am sorry, but I promised and I shall go with him." When the service was over, Finney started out the door. The man was waiting, took his arm, and said, "Come with me." They walked three or four blocks, turned into a side street, walked down an alley, and at the second house the man stopped. "Stay here a minute, Brother Finney." He reach-

ed into his pocket, pulled out a key, unlocked the door, turned to the preacher and said, "Come in." Mr. Finney walked into the room. There was a carpet on the floor, a mantelpiece, a desk, a swivel chair, two arm chairs. There was nothing else. There was a kind of thin board partition all round the room except where the fireplace was. Finney turned around. The man had locked the door, had reached into his back pocket, had pulled out a revolver, and was holding it in his hand. "I don't intend to do you any harm," he said. "I just want to ask you some questions. Did you mean what you said in your sermon last night?"

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The Editor Says--

Dr. Roberts L. Moyer, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, dean of Northwestern Bible Training School and Seminary, has gone to be with the Lord. He had agreed to contribute to the *Sword of the Lord*, and we will greatly miss him. He had such a clear grasp of Bible doctrine, was such a warm hearted and sensible preacher, his place of usefulness was so great that he will be greatly missed. Dear "Dr. Bob"! I loved him dearly and feel personally greatly bereaved. May God fill his place! He had a glorious home going and death was to him great gain.

What a happy revival time at Highland Park Baptist Church, Detroit! Dr. Wm. G. Colman is the fine pastor. He is a thorough Bible student, a fine gospel preacher, thirty years in one pulpit. The work prospers greatly under his leadership. Over 1000 were in Sunday School each of these last two Sundays I have been here. Rev. Albert Kee is assistant pastor. Both have been unusually kind to this (Continued on page three)

The Cleansing Power Of Christ's Blood

(Continued from page one)

my bartender in a brawl in my saloon. Is there hope for a man like me?"

Finney said, "The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

The man said, "Brother Finney, another question. In the back of this partition is a saloon. I own it, everything in it. We sell every kind of liquor to anybody who comes along. Many, many times I have taken the last penny out of a man's pocket, letting his wife and children go hungry. Many times women have brought their babies here and pled with me not to sell any more booze to their husbands, but I have driven them out and kept right on with the whiskey selling. Is there hope for a man like me?"

Finney said, "God says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"Another question, Brother Finney. In back of this other partition is a gambling joint, and it is as crooked as sin, as crooked as Satan. There isn't a decent wheel in the whole place. It is all loaded and crooked. A man leaves the saloon with some money left in his pocket, and we take his money away from him in there. Men have gone out of that gambling place to commit suicide when their money and perhaps entrusted funds were all gone. Is there any hope for a man like me?"

Finney said, "God says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"One more question, and I will let you go. When you walk out of this alley you turn to the right toward the street, look across the street, and you will see a two-story brown stone house. It is my home. I own it. My wife is there, and my eleven-year-old child, Margaret. Thirteen years ago I went to New York on business. I met a beautiful girl. I lied to her. I told her I was a stock broker, and she married me. I brought her here, and when she found out my business it broke her heart. I have made life a hell on earth for her. I have come home drunk, beaten her, abused her, locked her out, made her life more miserable than that of any brute beast. About a month ago I went home one night drunk, mean, miserable. My wife got in the way somehow, and I started beating her. My daughter threw herself between us. I slapped that girl across the face and knocked her against a red-hot stove. Her arm is burned from shoulder to wrist. It will never look like anything decent. Brother Finney, is there hope for a man like me?"

Finney got hold of that man's shoulders, shook him, and said: "O son, what a black story you have to tell! But God says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

The man said, "Thank you. Thank you very much. Pray for me. I am coming to church tomorrow night."

Finney went about his business. The next morning about seven o'clock, the saloon man

started across the street out of his office. His necktie was awry. His face was dusty and sweaty and tear-stained. He was shaking and rocking as though he were drunk. But let us go back to that room. He had taken that swivel chair and smashed the mirror, the fireplace, the desk, and the other chairs. He had smashed the partition on each side. Every bottle and barrel and bar mirror in that saloon was shattered and broken up. The sawdust was swimming ankle-deep in a terrible mixture of beer, gin, whiskey, and wine. In the gambling establishment, the tables smashed, the dice and cards were in the fireplace smoldering. He staggered across the street, walked up the stairs of his home, and sat down heavily in the chair in his room. His wife called the little girl, "Maggie, run upstairs and tell Daddy breakfast is ready." The girl walked slowly up the stairs. Half afraid, she stood in the door and said, "Daddy, Mamma said breakfast was ready; to come down."

"Maggie, darling, Daddy doesn't want any breakfast."

That little girl didn't walk; she just flew down the stairs. "Mamma, Daddy said, 'Maggie, darling,'

and he didn't—"

"Maggie, you didn't understand. You go back upstairs and tell Daddy to come down." Maggie went back upstairs with the mother following her. The man looked up as he heard the child's step, spread his knees out, and said, "Maggie, come here."

Shyly, frightened, in a tremble, the little girl walked up to him. He lifted her, put her on his knee, pressed his face against her breast and wept. The wife standing in the door, didn't know what had happened. After awhile he noticed her and said, "Wife, come here."

He sat her on his other knee, threw his big man's arms around those two whom he loved, whom he had so fearfully abused, lowered his face between them, and sobbed until the room almost shook with the impact of his emotion.

After some minutes, he controlled himself, looked up into the faces of his wife and girl, and said: "Wife, daughter, you needn't be afraid of me any more. God has brought you a new man, a new Daddy home today."

That same night that man, his wife, their child, walked down the aisle of the church, gave their hearts to Christ, and joined the church.

(From the book, GOD'S ANSWER TO MAN'S SIN, By Hyman Appelmann, Zondervan Publishing House. Used by permission.)

The Federal Council and The Deity of Christ

(Continued From Page One)

it can be assumed that the Council itself must act to accept or to reject it, and that such action must be taken no later than its next biennial session, which will be a little over one year hence," he said.

We would like to think that this failure to admit the Universalists into membership means that the Federal Council has at last taken a forthright position on the exclusion of all who deny the deity of Christ, but until it cleans its house of those Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, and what-not who believe just as the Universalists do on that subject, we are forced to the conclusion that there is an ulterior motive back of this inconsistency.

It seems to us that the Universalists have the Council in a very uncomfortable spot. If they admit that denomination to membership, out will go at least half a dozen other denominations in which there are very strong groups waiting for just such a convincing proof of the Council's infidelity. It would mean the end of the courtship which the Council has carried on for years with shy and reluctant United Lutherans. In cold figures they would gain some 51,000 members and might lose several millions.

On the other hand, if they reject the Universalists they offend not only that body and all other Unitarian groups but a great and influential number of their own members. If only the Universalists would be considerate enough to withdraw their application—but apparently they won't. It's really a tough spot!

An outstanding example of the Council's inclusion of leaders who deny many of the most foundational doctrines of the faith is Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who is continuously featured as a radio speaker under Federal Council auspices, and who certainly has complete endorsement of that organiza-

tion. I am not going to call into question Dr. Fosdick's sincerity, as many have done. But I have earnestly endeavored to find out just what he really believes because it so evidently represents that for which the Federal Council stands. In the absence of a comprehensive doctrinal statement, as I pointed out in the first chapter, it seems fair to assume that the uncontradicted statements on doctrinal matters made by its prominent leaders reveal its status as the breeding ground of apostasy in the Church.

Does Dr. Fosdick believe in the divinity of Christ? He states that "as a formula it is not in the New Testament" (*Modern Use of the Bible*, p. 187).

That good word "divinity" is one of the terms which modernists have so continually used with changed meaning that fundamentalists recently have discarded it in favor of the word "deity", which has seemed to them to be less liable to perversion. Dr. Fosdick recognizes no difference in the meaning of the words "divinity" and "deity." He uses them interchangeably. When he says "divinity" he means "deity" and vice versa. Then he proceeds to nullify the definitions of both these words which had been universally accepted by the Church until the rise of modernism. He states that "the divinity of Jesus is primarily an affirmation about God . . . Isaac Newton looked at it and looked through it into a universal law . . . Those first disciples looked at Jesus until they overpassed looking at him into a revelation of something eternally true about God" (*Living Under Tension*, pp.

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right, and saved people do not always do right, but people who have trusted Christ for salvation are born again and have everlasting life.

I enclose the little booklet, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" I hope you will read it with an open mind and heart, throwing away your doubts and previous conceptions. And I will be very

152, 153).

Dr. Fosdick makes it clear that he believes Jesus was in no sense "divine" or "deity" except as any of us may be. He says, "God can come into human life because God has come into human life (in Jesus). At its best, that is what the church has always meant by the divinity of Jesus. Do not, I beg of you, tie this great affirmation up with miraculous accompaniments, such as the virgin birth . . . as you know, I cannot believe it" (*Ibid.*, 157).

And again, "We moderns have lost faith in miracles, and if by miracles we mean occurrences involving the breaking of nature's laws, we are right, for nature's laws are God's and are never broken" (*Ibid.*, p. 22).

To say that God was in Christ presents "no theological puzzle at all" to Dr. Fosdick. "I think," says he, "God was in my mother, the source of all loveliness that blessed us there! And I rise up from that with a profound sense of the reality of what I am doing when I profess my faith that God was in Christ" (*The Hope of the World*, p. 104).

It is clear also that Dr. Fosdick believes that Jesus died for a great principle rather than as an atoning sacrifice. He says, "When a capacious soul comes, standing for something that he cares so much about he will die for it on Calvary," (Continued on page three)

happy to hear from you again, to know that you have put your trust in Christ alone and regardless of how you feel, that you believe He has done what He promised to do, and will continue to keep you safely because He promised.

In the Saviour's name, yours,

John R. Rice

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- V. Why Is a Person a Fool to Mock at Sin?
- VI. Why MUST Christ Die?
- VII. What Is God's Recipe for a Revival?
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Entered as second-class matter, Sept. 22, 1944, at the post office at Newton, Kansas, under the Act of March 3, 1897.

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Associate Editor

Published weekly. Offices: Newton, Kansas and 145 North Hale Street, Wheaton, Illinois.

Subscription Price: \$1.00 a year, Canada and Foreign Countries: \$1.50 a year.

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you cannot flatter him. He has identified himself with something greater than himself, of which he regards himself as the incarnation and instrument. He thinks of himself as the vehicle and agent of an eternal matter. He does not want his ego idolized; he wants his cause supported" (Ibid., p. 98).

Dr. Fosdick states that "the world has tried in two ways to get rid of Jesus: first, by crucifying him, and second by worshipping him. . . . If at first this seems a dangerous thing to say, remember that Jesus himself said it. He did not fear being opposed. He knew that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, and concerning his own cross, John reports his saying: 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' He did not fear being opposed; he feared being worshiped" (Ibid., p. 96).

The Editor Says - -

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evangelist. Crowds have been fine, there have been many conversions, including some older men and women. Sunday night the overflow crowd in lower auditorium included 160 people, and three of them at least, a man and wife and a young woman, came from that lower auditorium at the invitation to accept Christ, along with those who came to Christ in the regular auditorium where they could see the speaker. And how these Detroit and Highland Park people take my books!

Mrs. Rice came to Detroit to see me, arriving this (Friday) morning, will be in the services over the week-end and return with me Monday to Wheaton. There are fine preachers in Wheaton, but I am glad she wanted to hear me. It is sweet to be together in services again.

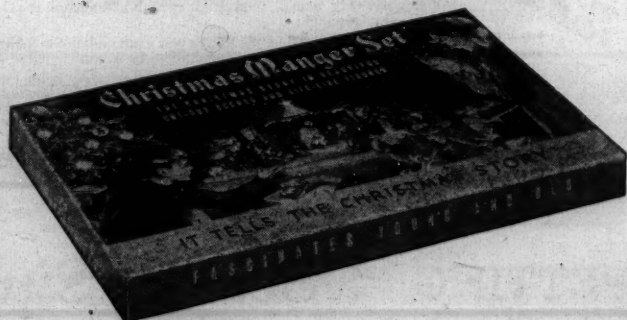
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96) Few modernists will question Dr. Fosdick's definition of deity when he answers an imaginary inquiry: "But, then, do you not believe in the divinity of Jesus? To which I answer, that I believe in the divinity of Jesus with all my faculties if we can come to an understanding about what we mean by divinity. Are you willing to start with John's idea of divinity in the New Testament: 'God is love'? That is divinity—love. Divinity is not something super-natural that ever and again invades the natural order in a crashing miracle. Divinity is love. Here and now it shines through the highest spiritual experience we know. Wherever goodness, beauty, truth, love are—there is the divine. And the divinity of Jesus is the divinity of his spiritual life" (Ibid., p. 103).

His hypothetical inquirer is made to suggest that "we all have some of that divine spark in us; we all have some goodness, truth, love, and therefore on that basis the divinity of Jesus differs from ours in degree, indeed, but not in kind," to which Dr. Fosdick answers, "Are you afraid of that conclusion? Of course, the divinity of Jesus differs from ours in degree but not in kind" (Ibid., p. 103).

And so we have in Fosdickian theology, a Christ who was normally born, whose miracles are myths, who was simply humanity at its best, who died for his convictions on a cross, and whose dust is still in an unknown Syrian grave.

Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, recently elected Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., has long been prominent in the Federal Council. While he has sometimes made statements which would seem to indicate his belief in the deity of Jesus, he is never quite convincing. Other of his statements make it perfectly clear that he is a Unitarian in belief.

Dr. Coffin says, "Jesus' conscience was burdened both with the sins of the nation and with the sense of His complicity in these sins" (*The Meaning of the Cross*, p. 54).

Dr. Coffin suggests that Christians through the centuries have been puzzled because of Jesus' "insistence on undergoing this symbol of repentance," referring to His baptism by John. Then he goes on to explain that, "if His nation was not fulfilling God's purpose, He was implicated in its failure. If the leaders of the Church were there, acknowledging its faultiness and their guilt, He as a member of the Church was involved in its sin. If social outcasts, harlots, and publicans were there, pouring out their penitence, He was accountable for conditions which helped make harlots and grasping collectors of

revenue . . . It was no pose on His part when He put Himself at their side as a penitent" (Ibid., pp. 51,52).

And again Dr. Coffin states, "On the cross He bore the sins of His time and society in the sense of being the Victim of their implacable hostility. And He bore them on His conscience when He identified Himself with sinners and voluntarily gave His life as an emancipation for many. These sins are the corporate sins of humanity. Jesus did not consciously assume the iniquity of an ancient Egyptian under the Pharaohs who grafted in a contract on the pyramids, or the wickedness of a white slaver who in 1931 inveigled a girl to a life of shame. He bore the collective sins of the community of His day" (Ibid., pp. 97, 98).

"In bearing sin for us," says Dr. Coffin, "there is a sense in which we speak of Christ as our substitute. He in His life and on the Cross does something for us which we, thanks to Him, are relieved from doing. Those of us who spend our holidays in the mountains know our indebtedness to trailmakers, who blazed paths through the forest and set up cairns on the slopes of the summits above the timber line. They have undergone for us the uncertainty and toil of discovering the route which avoids an impassable crevasse, which takes us around some subordinate peak, which carries us up a favoring ridge with a fine outlook, which skirts a precipitate side and sets us on an open approach to the top. We need not repeat their experiments nor taste their sense of being baffled. They reached the summit and have marked for us a sure way. We profit by their finished task in the well-indicated trail. What they did, they did for many" (Ibid., pp. 101, 102).

Who, pray tell, does bear the sins of this present generation, if not the Lord Jesus Christ?

Again, Dr. Coffin says, "The trail of vicarious love is to be taken and pursued until we, too, bear the sins of men and offer ourselves in service for their redemption. 'He laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren'" (Ibid., p. 103).

There is absolutely nothing in the accomplishment of Jesus on the Cross, according to this statement, which may not be duplicated by others who are devoted and heroic, as occasion requires. This theology puts Joan of Arc, Abraham Lincoln, and all other martyrs to a worthy cause on a par with Jesus and equal to Him in divinity.

Again we quote Dr. Coffin: "It does not derogate from the worth of Christ that men have known other saviors who awakened their loyalty. He does not suffer from comparison with these divinities; rather He towers above them in His ethical supremacy; and the craving which they have aroused, and in part satisfied, He lays hold on and satisfies completely. The religious experience of these non-Christian faiths is not to be depreciated. Their saints have been to some extent kinsmen in spirit of Jesus and have prepared the way for His gospel" (Ibid., p. 104).

Completely renouncing the doctrine of the atonement, Dr. Coffin points out the error in "certain widely used hymns (which) still perpetuate the theory that God pardons sinners because Christ purchased that pardon by His obedience and suffering" (Ibid., p. 118).

Dr. Coffin's Christ is a completely human Christ without supernatural knowledge. In his book *Religion Yesterday and Today* (p.

78), he shares Dr. W. S. Rainsford's view that "Jesus was realest of the real. He shared the beliefs of His time. He believed in the nearness of the Parousia—as did Paul—and was mistaken . . . He did not know any more about philosophy or philology, about history or natural laws, than did any Jew about Him, except in so far as a pure heart helps knowledge." Dr. Coffin further says of Jesus, "He did not think of Himself as originating anything" (*God's Turn*, p. 5).

"The only means in His power to establish His kingdom," says Dr. Coffin, "is to go up and offer Himself a sacrifice at Jerusalem. He is not always sure that this costly effort will succeed. He passes through struggles of soul. People regard Him as a failure. His nearest friends shake their heads over Him. This desperate venture of love in vicarious sacrifice is not His own preferred plan. He pleads in agony for a golden alternative: 'O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' It is the courage of accepting what seems to Him a second best . . ." (Ibid., p. 20).

"Jesus' entire career was based on the assumption that this and all worlds were ruled by a loving God . . . He counted Him His chief friend," continues Dr. Coffin (Ibid., p. 20).

Dr. Coffin professes to believe that Jesus is alive but makes it clear that he believes Him alive "in spirit" only, i.e., in the sense that His work is going on in the lives and acts of His followers. "The Easter faith in which the Christian Church was born is not that Jesus survived death and gave evidence of such survival, as, for example, spiritualists fancy they receive communications from the dead assuring them of their continuing existence; but that Jesus was alive in power with and among His disciples in this world, whence His foes had banished Him, and was going on with His work in and through His

Church" (Ibid., p. 160).

Bishop Francis John McConnell, president of the Federal Council between 1928 and 1932, is in full accord with the Unitarianism of Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Coffin. He is even more clever than they in that he seldom makes a definite and unqualified statement of his own position. But the net result is the same. The seeds of poisonous doubt are sown in the hearts and minds of his readers, and the results are evident in the church of which he is a leader as well as far beyond

(Continued on page four)

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The Federal Council and The Deity of Christ

(Continued from page three)

its boundaries in the greater circle of the Council.

Here is a sample of the indirect sabotage of truth: "There is indeed a measure of justice in an impatience against dogmatists who will have it that if we cannot have a miraculous Christ we cannot have any Christ . . ." (*The Christlike God*, p. 12).

Again, "If the form of philosophy has lent itself readily to making Jesus divine, that philosophy has been freely utilized, as witness the use by the church of the Logos notion. . . It is this insistence upon divinity that puzzles so many of the younger students of the life of Christ . . . Some students can hardly restrain their resentment at the tendency to deify Jesus, since that tendency seems to them to rob Him of His supreme value as a human ideal. To such students the tendency to make man into God seems not much better than other attempts of the kind which were characteristic even of the heathenism into which Christianity came. Critics point out to us that in the early days of the Church it was quite common even for popular thought to deify man." Reference is made to the occasion when the multitudes in South Galatia called Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Mercury, as an example of the "idea of their time which conceived of gods as capable of appearing in human form, and which found it easy to believe that a man could become a god."

Then comes the question, "Is not this tendency to deify Jesus more heathen than Christian? Are we not most truly Christian when we cut loose from a heathen propensity and take Jesus simply for the character that he was and for the ideal that he is?" (*Ibid.*, pp. 14,15).

Dr. McConnell comments that "in the early days of the Church there were some—probably only a few—thinkers who taught that Satan had a claim on the souls of men which only the death of the Son of God could satisfy, and that God met the obligation by sending the Son to the Cross. As an intellectual construction this theory arouses only amused pity today . . ." (*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18).

Now in all this, Bishop McConnell hasn't made a single dogmatic statement. He hasn't said that he disbelieves in a miraculous Christ. He only suggests that there is cause for impatience against dogmatists who insist on it. He hasn't said that it is more heathen than Christian to deify Jesus. He only refers to the question which others are asking. But it is notable that he nowhere affirms that Jesus is deity, but, on the contrary, leaves the reader with a strong impression of his disapproval of a supernatural Christ. His heterodoxy often has the virtue of originality, at least, as for instance in his declaration that "if we are to believe in Christianity at its full value, we have to think of God as Christian" (*Ibid.*, p. 60).

The statements of these three prominent Council leaders appear to represent the thinking of the great majority of its officials on the subject of the deity of Christ. If it does not, why do they continue to give their sanction and support to such heresy?

We do not wish to be irascible about this, but it seems to us that the chief value of the "divinity" statement in the preamble of the Council constitution is that it may be pointed to as proof (when proof is needed to convince reluctant evangelicals) that the Council is a

Simon-pure orthodox organization. It does bar some honest Unitarians who are not willing to redefine "deity" or "divinity," but it covers a multitude of sins with the liberals who are ready to agree to anything which will permit them to proceed with their purpose to dominate evangelical groups by the process of infiltration.

In talking with a friend recently, the subject of Dr. Fosdick's alleged heterodoxy came up. He contended that Dr. Fosdick is as much an evangelical as anyone could desire and offered this proof: Said he, "I recently showed a friend of mine, who is an ardent fundamentalist, a series of quotations from a certain clergyman, whom I did not name, and asked him whether he thought the person was a modernist or a fundamentalist. He said, 'Unquestionably, he is a fundamentalist.' I was quoting from Dr. Fosdick."

I had this in mind in my recent extensive reading of Dr. Fosdick's sermons. I am convinced that it would be entirely possible to compile a series of statements from these sermons which would persuade the average layman that Dr. Fosdick is an evangelical. But to the more discerning, even the most favorable compilation of these statements would leave room for doubt because of certain areas of theology which he leaves severely alone. One may hunt in vain for any reference to the need of a blood atonement for sin, or regeneration as a requirement for becoming a child of God.

But other references are found frequently which, while they may not be made with any intent to deceive, certainly give the average reader reason to think that Dr. Fosdick believes the things which, actually, he does not believe at all.

For instance, Dr. Fosdick speaks repeatedly of "the God of all mankind revealed in Christ" (*Living under Tension*, p. 218). That statement certainly belongs to the strictest form of orthodoxy. It speaks to us of the miraculous birth, the unique Sonship, the two natures, human and divine, which were His in equal measure. But Dr. Fosdick very evidently means something entirely different. He repudiates every phrase of this interpretation. To him, Christ is a supreme, or possibly only superior example of what human nature may be if indwelt by God. That, and nothing more. As such he would "exalt him" (*Ibid.*, p. 160) and "adore him" (*Adventurous Religion*, p. 323) but would regard it as dangerous to worship him. We quote him again to make his position clear: "Yet the God who was in Jesus is the same God who is in us; you cannot have one God and two kinds of divinity. It was one of the supreme days in man's spiritual history when human nature in Jesus was carried out from the dark into the light and men saw as never before what could happen to it when the divine life was released through it" (*Living under Tension*, p. 160). "If Jesus is divine and if divinity is in each of us, like the vital forces which in winter wait in the frozen ground until the spring comes, that is a gospel!" (*Ibid.*, p. 159). This seems a very clever attempt to confuse the gullible, and it has succeeded many times. But it is for shallow thinkers and will not stand the clear shining light of God's Word. In it is no place for regeneration or the incoming of a new life from God. We are all made to possess the divine spark, no matter how sinful we may be.

Dr. Fosdick delights in reducing Jesus to human proportions and comparing His sacrifice with that of others. He states, ". . . the historic Jesus has given the world its most appealing and effective exhibition of vicarious sacrifice. Vicarious sacrifice is not new in man's life.

. . . Whenever one meets vicarious sacrifice—in Livingstone voluntarily assuming the burden of Africa's misery, in Father Damien becoming a leper to the lepers when he need not have done it, in Florence Nightingale taking on herself the tragedy of battlefields which she never had caused—it always is the most subduing and impressive fact mankind can face." (*Modern Use of the Bible*, p. 229).

If the premise of Dr. Fosdick, Dr. Coffin, and Bishop McConnell in regard to the humanity of Jesus is correct, their thesis also is sound, and Jesus is debased eternally to our level. It would be at least a theoretical possibility for any other human being to be the equal of or to surpass Jesus in His character and attainments. Therefore, we do not need a Saviour. We need only to emulate Jesus in consecration to God and service to our fellow men to be every whit as much deity as He. Divinity, according to this theology, is resident from birth in every son of Adam—in Pilate, in Judas, in Adolph Hitler, in Mussolini, in Joseph Stalin. All they or we need to do is to fan the ember into flame.

That another character with superlative qualities will come, Dr. Fosdick is convinced. His reference to the coming of a "decisive messiah" is food for thought. We quote from *Living under Tension*, p. 228: "Some day, I predict, a man will rise by whose hands a federation of the world will be (so) effected, and wars (so) stopped thereby, that his name will go down across the centuries associated with that great achievement, as Copernicus' name is with the new astronomy, or Lincoln's with the preservation of our union. That man will come. Some day he will arise. For all we know he may be lying this morning in some unknown village in his crib. But when he comes, what will it take to make him decisive? Multitudes of us who have gone before, who have believed in peace when belief was difficult, prophetic spirits undaunted by man's brutality, hungry souls wanting peace, wise souls seeing war's futility, courageous souls with faith in brotherhood's possibility—a multitude of plain people must prepare the way before the decisive messiah can come with peace in his hands. All of us do matter; personality even in us does count."

Dr. Fosdick, in describing the man who is to come as the "decisive messiah" is, by inference, relegating Jesus to the place of "indecisive messiah." One cannot help recalling the words of Jesus, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43).

The "decisive messiah" according to Dr. Fosdick, will come "with peace in his hands." Again, we are reminded of the warning of God's Word about a fake messiah and a fake peace to be expected: "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1 Thess. 5:3). "And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many" (Dan. 8:25). It seems to us that Dr. Fosdick's statement is a very good "build up" for the anti-christ.

Dr. Fosdick has been the subject of many attacks during the past two decades, and he has undoubtedly deserved them, as he has become a "front" for the liberals of America. But a great difficulty with fundamentalists is that they have been too much concerned with what the case deserves and too little concerned with what the case needs. A friend of mine, an aged clergyman, told me recently that Dr. Fosdick is on his daily prayer list. He believes that God may yet cause him to see his error and return to the faith from which he has departed. How greatly he and others might be used of God to bring about a nation-wide revival if they would come to see the folly of their

unbelief and return to the Book and the Message. Could we not all join in the daily prayer of my friend?

We have quoted the statements of these three leaders rather freely, not to single them out as exceptional examples of heretical leadership, but rather to illustrate the accepted pattern of theological thinking of our day among the so-called liberals who dominate the policies of the Federal Council. The views quoted are usual, not exceptional.

Modernism usually starts with doubt of the inerrancy of the Bible. Having cast aside the only reliable source of authoritative teaching there is no stopping place for unbelief this side of absolute atheism. A generation ago the battleground was "inspiration." Then it was the miracles and the virgin birth of Christ. After that the physical resurrection of Jesus was questioned. Then His deity was denied. Now the battleground in the apostate church has reached its ultimate phase over the character of God or the question of His existence.

Bishop F. J. McConnell is willing to admit that there is a God but would like Him reduced in size to more nearly human proportions. He says: How then must we think of God whom men are freely to crown Lord of all? If present day tendencies are to give us any clues we cannot think of God as absolute in the old sense. The only absolutes we can respect are the absolutes of the moral realm. We are in protest against absolutism in rulers. The call of men today is for a limited God (*Democratic Christianity*, p. 2).

Dr. Fosdick also rebels against an omnipotent God, for he boldly says, "If God is an omnipotent monarch who can do anything he pleases, he has no business to please to do some things he does, and permit some things that he allows" (*Living under Tension*, p. 219).

We can only say, "May God forgive such blasphemy!"

We do not wish to be harsh in our judgment. We do not wish to be unkind or ill-tempered in our approach to the matter of modernism in the Federal Council and other interchurch groups. But we wish to put this matter of the deity of our Lord and other foundation stones of our faith, with the modernist position regarding them, out in the open for public inspection.

Here, on these most important doctrines of the Christian faith, is the position of the Federal Council. It is in direct opposition to that for which the National Association of Evangelicals stands regarding God and the person and work of Christ. The Federal Council, because of its unfaithfulness to Christ in doctrine, cannot represent the millions of evangelicals who have been without adequate representation until this National Association of Evangelicals was organized.

(This is the second of five articles on the Federal Council of Churches By Dr. J. Elwin Wright, Executive secretary, National Association of Evangelicals. See that your pastor gets to read these articles. They are soberly written, in Christian spirit and of great importance.)

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